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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

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POLITICAL FACTORS IN THE FORMULATION OF STRATEGY

A lecture delivered
at the Naval War College
on 7 September 1954 by
Professor Dexter Perkins

Gentlemen :

I am very happy to be here this morning. I am glad to talk on a subject which interests me deeply and on which I have written a good deal.

I am going to define "strategy" in what I have to say as "the accumulation and application of physical power." I want to start by saying something about the first of these two general topics.

Americans, historically, have not on the whole valued as highly as they ought the significance of physical power in international affairs. I am afraid that we are still, in 1954, a relatively naive people so far as physical power is concerned. We have certainly been a naive people, looking at the matter from the historical point of view.

There is a very interesting book which has just been published by Charles Burton Marshall, who is a member of the Policy Committee of the State Department, of which Paul Nitze and George Kennan have been members (people whom I very much admire), on this question of "The Limits of Foreign Policy." Mr. Marshall points out, in retrospect, how attracted the American people have been to gadgets in international affairs and to formulae that really do not cut to the heart of the problem of international relations. One of these gadgets, for example, is arbitration. It is of course useful from time to time to settle disputes by arbitral

means. But when you consider the vast amount of work that has gone into the negotiation of arbitration treaties and then consider how few really significant questions have ever been settled by arbitration treaties, you arrive at a truer estimate of their significance.

The Treaty of 1871, the Geneva arbitration, is perhaps as conspicuous an example as we have. The settlement of the "fisheries" dispute with Great Britain in 1910 is another example. But in general it is difficult to point to international controversies, even of the second rank, which have been settled by the process of arbitration.

Secretary of State Bryan, in 1913-14, attached very great importance to what were called the "cooling-off treaties," those treaties which provided for investigation of a dispute before resort to war. The "cooling-off treaties" have never been invoked, but an immense amount of work went into them.

Secretary Kellogg, in 1928, negotiated that extraordinary instrument, The Kellogg Peace Pact, by which the nations of the world agreed not to resort to war, "as an instrument of national policy." This arrangement, this treaty which was nothing more than "peace by promises," was violated within the year and it was, of course, completely impotent to prevent the events of the thirties and the still more extraordinary and tragic events of the forties.

Another expedient — but one of which I wish to speak a little more respectfully — is the idea of "peace by international organization." I think it would be a mistake as a practical matter to underrate the possible significance of an international organization such as the United Nations. There are many ways in which such a forum can be useful; for example, in the exchange of views, in the maintenance of contacts, in dealing with questions that do not involve peace or war and in dealing with technical questions. I do not wish to be understood as critical of the United Nations

in any fundamental sense. But it seems to me that the idea of collective security, which was written into the Charter of the United Nations and which was the fundamental principle written into the Covenant of the League of Nations in 1918, is not an idea in its general form in which one should put his complete trust.

You will find in the YALE REVIEW for July an interesting article by Professor Arnold Wolfers of Yale on "Collective Security," and one of the most thoughtful which I have seen. He comes to conclusions with which I should be happy to associate myself. He comes to the conclusion that the idea of collective security in its total sense is an idea which is unworkable. But he also suggests — which it seems to me is important to remember — that out of collective security as it has been batted about in public discussion in this country for the last thirty years has come the idea of close association with other nations for the maintenance of peace. Out of the idea of the Covenant and the Charter there has come a frame of mind (to me, an important frame of mind) which makes it possible for the United States to associate with other like-minded nations in the maintenance of peace. I do not think there are very many of us today who do not think that is overwhelmingly important. We have long since passed the stage where we would go-it-alone. In this respect the faith of the American people in international mechanism, while exaggerated, has had the important by-product of making us more ready to accept the notion that we must operate with other like-minded nations in the field of international affairs.

Nonetheless, as you can see from this brief historical review, the Americans have often thought of gadgets as the solution of international problems. There is no way out of the proposition that "the ultimate source of authority in international affairs is power and nothing less than the maintenance of power is adequate for the direction of the foreign policy of a nation such as the United States." The question comes, of course, as to what we

mean by "power," how the power is to be accumulated, and how the power is to be applied. But we must be strong and clear (as probably everybody in this room is) as to the fundamental proposition. It is one thing to talk about accumulating power and another thing to accumulate power. The minute you begin to discuss the problem in practical terms, you come up against political factors. You cannot say that the problem is simple. You cannot even say that the problem is technical, for though it is technical it is also a major political problem — and that is true of every nation in the world.

I do not know how many of you happened to have read the very interesting book which I reviewed in the *YALE REVIEW* — Sir John Slessor's "Strategy for the West," which was published only a short time ago. We find there some of the same preoccupations on the part of a distinguished British airman that we find on the part of our leaders here in the United States: the question of how to gear the problem of power to the realities of our economic and political life. There is a point, for example, beyond which the burden of preparedness becomes politically heavy and produces a possible reaction. You cannot simply say: "We must have all the power that there is." You have to consider the fiscal problem. In a country like the United States, which is devoted to a system of free enterprise in a broad sense of the term, which is still a capitalistic country and a country dependent upon individual initiative, the problem of heavy taxes and of large government expenditures is a problem which is bound to impinge upon the problem of preparedness, as all of us in this room would wish to see "preparedness" defined.

When you come to the question of how large the budget should be, I think there are some general observations which I want to make from a political point of view. Certainly there are limits to what the American people will stand and these limits have to be observed. This means several things, to which I want particularly to call your attention. In the first place, does this

mean that the balancing of the budget is a fundamental consideration as against the necessity for national security? I, personally, would answer that question in the negative, if you will give me leave to expand my thoughts. I think that the elementary principles with regard to this matter are not always clearly understood.

I call your attention particularly, again, to an article by Professor Sumner H. Slichter in July, 1952, issue of the ATLANTIC MONTHLY. He asks whether inflation is bad. Inflation is bad if you apply the term in the fullest sense for there is a point at which inflation is like alcohol: too much of it leads to the intoxication of a body politic and cripples and destroys. But it is a wholly different matter to assume that we must have a balanced budget in the literal sense of the word. There is some political leeway there and the nature of the leeway is defined by the nature of the American economy.

What we have to avoid is a severe rise in prices in the United States, which is inflationary. But, as I think any trained economist will tell you, if you are increasing the rate of your productivity in the country at large and unbalance the budget only a little you will not have inflation. In other words if the production of goods will sop up the creation of money, you will have a relatively stable economy. I do not think that a fetish ought to be made of a balanced budget from that point of view. The budget ought not to be too much unbalanced, but it need not be a matter of complete fiscal orthodoxy.

I want to call your attention to another factor in this regard. After all, the things about which we are talking here are vital to the security of the nation, and we *can* have (I do not say we *do* have) so much preoccupation with finance that we neglect the very elements of national security. This is precisely what happened in the 1930's, of course, in the case of Great Britain. The business-minded governments of Stanley Baldwin and of Neville Chamberlain put so much emphasis on fiscal sanity that they neglected the defense of the nation. I think there is a lesson there

of fundamental significance to the America of the 1950's, and indeed the example of the precedent which I cite is one which I believe ought to be in all of our minds. You cannot buy peace at the expense of national security. You cannot be so preoccupied with the fiscal problems that you do not do what needs to be done from the point of view of national defense. We must bear that in mind.

We have an administration at the present time (and this is not criticism — this is analysis) which is more sensitive to the pressure of the business interests than the administration which preceded it. This may be very well and it may be useful. Certainly, as a historian, I do not make snap judgements of an administration inside of twenty-one months; I begin to tell you what it has done or has not done after I have seen it in retrospect — that is the historian's privilege. But there is always the possibility that there will be too much preoccupation with the fiscal and too little preoccupation with the elementary subject of national defense.

A second question arises with regard to defense. This is connected with the idea of fiscal sanity. I think that we know that those friends who have most been preoccupied with fiscal affairs have again and again laid the emphasis on *defense* as distinguished from *offense* in the construction of the national arms. We have examples of this not only in American history but in European history.

We have, for instance, Jefferson's famous "gunboat policy," which was probably the most cock-eyed idea that has ever been posed by a President of the United States with regard to national security. I have never been able to see how it ever got by the Secretary of the Navy in the period of the Jefferson administration.

We have such an idea as the Maginot Line: the French idea (on land this time) that you could construct a barrier which

could not be breached. You know what happened to the French under those circumstances.

Today, we have, of course, a certain number of people (and they are those who represent the extreme Right Wing on the problem of national defense) who would wish to see defensive air power made the center of our system of armed organization and who assume that by defensive means you can protect yourself. This is the old "isolationism" in a new guise.

It seems to me that if there is any lesson that the Study of War suggests to the historian it is that offensive weapons have to be thought about and have to be created. You cannot fight a war by sitting still and letting somebody fight you. The preoccupation with defense may be, politically, a very dangerous thing. However, I find evidences of it from time to time in the language of some of my contemporaries.

A much more difficult question (and this, of course, is a question on which I do not regard myself as a specialist), a question which will have to be faced, which is bound to cause grave difficulty and which, I think, presents a challenge to the disinterestedness and to the breadth of view of the Armed Services, concerns the relative importance of the various branches of the Services. I think that the political lesson there is fairly obvious. The pressures today — and this is understandable — are toward the building up of air power. They probably should be, in the sense that air power will play a role in the future such as it has never played in the past. I do not see how we can get away from that fact, but it would be a very grave mistake if our preoccupation with air power let us neglect the role that the Army and the Navy can perform in the defense of the nation and in the protection of its security. Here, again, I think that political and fiscal motives operate alongside the question of national security as to the character of the problem. I think that we have got to be careful to recognize that air power is not a solution of the problem of security in a total sense of the word.

There is too much talk about massive retaliation, which means air retaliation, as if it were a solution to the international problem. It is not a solution of the international problem. That fact has been made very clear by some contemporary events, to which I shall want to call your attention a little later in these comments but which, for the moment, I will not attempt to deal with. Let us remember — again politically speaking, however — that we have a difficult problem here because it is so easy for simple-minded people to assume what appears in the newspapers again and again; i.e., that there is some simple method of licking the problem of power, and that massive retaliation is it. I must say quite frankly that I think Secretary Dulles made a very great error, from the standpoint of the political education of the nation, in laying the emphasis on massive retaliation. Massive retaliation by air will not be enough if we are involved in war; indeed, it will not be enough to maintain our position in the world-at-large.

What I have said relates, as you can see, to the fiscal considerations which affect the attitude of Congress when they come to vote funds for the Armed Services. I want to turn next to the question of the *application* of power, as distinguished from the accumulation of power. There are all kinds of technical problems which I am not competent to discuss with regard to the accumulation of power. What I have wanted to do is to suggest the general character of the problem. Beyond the fiscal problem, and lying at the very roots of the psychology of the American nation, is the question of under what circumstances we can fight and will fight.

First, we are not in a position — and will never be in a position — to fight a preventive war. There may be individuals who believe in a preventive war (and there are such). I am not very much disturbed because I just do not think that that is the way Americans are made. I do not believe that the national psychology of the American people, whatever it may be, would make possible a preventive war. I call your attention to a few facts in that regard.

I call your attention to a FORTUNE poll, for example, of a year or so ago in which the question was frankly asked and in which nine out of ten of the pollees returned a negative answer.

Only last night I picked up at the bookstore here the ATLANTIC MONTHLY for September, in which there was a brilliant article (and one which I think Americans should read) by Mr. Thomas Finletter, who, of course, was Secretary of Air in the Truman administration. I remember Mr. Finletter well. As a matter of fact, he was a subordinate officer in my little show at Chaumont in 1918 and I have seen him several times since then. This is an alarmist article in a sense. It is an article calling for a much greater expenditure on national defense. Mr. Finletter says that a preventive war is a practical impossibility for the people of the United States and with his knowledge not only of the strategic problems but of the political problems, I think his point of view is entitled to very great respect. I do not think that we can think in terms of the application of power in that sense.

What you have to have in war is the united moral support of your own nation — this is something much more easily understood by politicians than it is by technicians or by naval and military men. This is a necessity for an effective waging of war. We went into one war where we did not have it and, although there were certainly brilliant actions on the seas and one brilliant action on land in that war, we made a mess of things in general. That, of course, was the War of 1812. Reading the history of the War of 1812 is no fun for most Americans. The trouble was that the Madison administration allowed the country to drift into war when it was not integrated at home, when there was a deep division of opinion, and the war was an inconclusive and, in some ways, an unsuccessful war. Preventive war would violate the sensibilities of such large numbers of Americans — some of them fuzzy-minded, it may be — that it would not be, in my judgment, a practicable proposition.

Indeed, I will go further than that. I think that the soundest strategy in the world was pursued by Woodrow Wilson in 1917, and still more by Franklin Roosevelt in 1941, when they saw to it that the initial blow came from the other side. Indeed, it was the strategy of Abraham Lincoln in 1861. There is an immense political and moral gain in the application of physical power if you can regard yourself as attacked. That was why Lincoln waited for the South to fire on Sumter. That was why, from March 4 to April 14, 1861, the administration seemed to be shuffling, fidgeting and not getting anywhere in particular.

Then, of course, we know the story of 1941. Having just reviewed that in an article in the *VIRGINIA QUARTERLY* for Summer, 1954, entitled "Was Roosevelt Wrong?" (which I say he was not), I believe what he did was to so maneuver the "situation," if you wish to use that word, so that it was the violent, hateful and shameless attack upon us which unified the nation and made our war-waging capacity very much greater than it would have been in other terms.

From the point of view of American psychology and American politics, it is a good thing to have the other side strike the first blow. Much the same thing applies to the policy of patience pursued by Woodrow Wilson in the years 1915-17. Of course I would not deny that there are risks involved there (we can talk about that later). But I think, on the whole, that when you view the election in 1916 and see the degree to which a large part of the country was not yet reconciled to the fact of international light it was a good thing we waited until the issue became completely clear so far as Germany's submarine warfare was concerned and, therefore, were united when the time came.

There is something, however, far more profound than this involved in the question of international politics and the application of force. That is something which I want to see much more studied than it has been (on which I have written a little essay in my

book, "The American Approach to Foreign Policy") and which deserves a great deal more discussion than it has yet received. It is the question of the public mood in the broad sense of the term, the oscillations in the public mood in the formation of foreign policy, and, therefore, in the application of force.

Let us look at this problem from the historical point of view. If you view the history of the United States over the period of one hundred and sixty-five years, or since 1789, you will find that the American people at times have been ready to fight and at other times have been extremely reluctant to fight. Let me go over the timetable with you in a brief sort of way.

From 1789 down to about 1810, the prevailing American mood was, on the whole, peaceful. There was a little, informal war with France in 1798, but John Adams was truly interpreting American sentiment when he brought it to an end in 1800.

In the Jeffersonian period, as you know, we acted (quite ridiculously, I grant you) on the theory that commercial retaliation was a rational substitute for war and that we could bring other nations to heel by commercial retaliation. This did not prove to be true. I may say that the study of the "Jeffersonian embargo" is something which I think should be very seriously considered and emphasized. This, to me, is a very striking example of the futility of that point of view which assumes that economic pressure is a substitute for war, for I do not think that it is. It was not so in the League dispute of 1935 in the Italian controversy with Ethiopia; neither was it so when the pressure was applied in the freezing of Japanese assets in July of 1941. This will not work. However, the mood of the country was such that it was tried; it was tried, and failed.

Around 1810 there came to be a wave of national sentiment, the existence of which, if we were to analyze it, is perfectly clear, and the country moved toward war. This period of nationalism is exhibited in the War of 1812.

As usually happens after war, this period of nationalistic sentiment extended itself for a little time after the War of 1812, and then the pendulum swung back again. So in 1823 we had the Monroe Doctrine, which is the apex of the nationalistic movement.

From 1823 to roughly 1843, there is a situation where the pacific mood dominates. The country is preoccupied with its internal problems; the country is thinking internally, and not externally. This period is the period (and you can put it in personal terms if you want to) when "Old Hickory" (Andrew Jackson) came to the presidency. Of course my conservative forebears up in New England thought the world had come to an end and that he surely would plunge us into war somewhere. As a matter of fact, of course, this was an administration which was extremely restrained in the field of foreign affairs.

Then, again, we get the swing of the pendulum in the period 1844-48 with a new nationalistic impulse which resulted in the Annexation of Texas and the Mexican War, the pendulum swinging toward a more military foreign policy.

You can extend that sort of thing to the period of the 1850's, a period in which this nationalistic sentiment is declining and in which there is a preoccupation with domestic affairs.

After the terrible and tragic bloodletting of the Civil War (1861-1865), there is again a period when the country does not want to be bothered; when it demobilizes the forces, reducing its armed establishment to an absurd figure. In other words, there is a period there where reaction sets in.

In the 1890's there is again a movement of exuberant nationalism, illustrated by the War of 1898 and by the personality of Theodore Roosevelt.

Again (I will skip some of the steps, but I am sure that I am making my point clear), there is a period of reaction incident to the Depression of 1929 — a period when the country,

again, does not want to be bothered and resorts to measures which in retrospect seem fairly absurd (and which, indeed, seemed absurd to me at the time) ; that is, resorted to measures to keep out of war by keeping out of trouble in general — the “neutrality” legislation of the period 1935-37. Although I am sure the President did not sympathize with this period of the public mood, he was powerless to check it. It was not until after Munich and the outbreak of the War in Europe that the Americans woke up to their problem again and that another type of sentiment existed.

You will always find that administrations in power must be affected by the public mood. The average citizen probably counts less in foreign affairs than he thinks he does. But when it comes to a given moment, the way in which the country expresses itself will determine whether or not it is possible to apply force vigorously to the solution of an international problem.

In regard to Indochina (here, I am speaking of the present to illustrate my point), the fundamental fact is that this country in the last analysis did not want to do anything about Indochina. There may have been good reasons why we acted in the way we did (I shall come back to this later on) in divorcing strategy from politics, but the fundamental fact was that President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon and Senator Knowland, if you will, sent up these trial balloons (*ballons d'essai*, as the French call them), and the country's response was unfavorable. We did not take vigorous action in Indochina very largely because American public opinion was at the present time by no means willing to commit itself to any kind of enterprise in the Far East which would involve the application of power on a grand scale.

When you reach the fact of the application of power, there is another set of problems with which I want to deal: that is, the application of power once the country has gone to war. The last World War had some interesting examples of the manner in which Americans apply power and some interesting questions which I am not going to dogmatize about but which I want to

present to your attention, particularly, because they are so much discussed.

One very clear contrast is made again and again. Of course a most important book on the subject, a brilliantly written book (with which I disagree), is Mr. Chester Wilmot's book, "The Struggle for Europe," in which he states that the Americans wanted to go straight for their objective without thinking of the politics of the problem, but that the British saw further; they saw the political elements of the problem and wished to pursue a strategy that was very different from that of the Americans.

There is not any question, of course (although the matter will be clouded by denials or half-denials), that Winston Churchill and George Marshall did not see the problem of the Invasion of Europe from the same point of view. They did not see it from the same point of view because they had different backgrounds and different memories. Churchill remembered the war of the trenches of 1914-18, and he did not want to get into it again; he had not adjusted himself to the realities of land power under new circumstances. Marshall interpreted and represented well the point of view of the American people: to get the war over with, to strike at the enemy and to demolish him -- no matter if the cost were high. This point of view which General Marshall steadfastly maintained is only one of the many honorable accomplishments of his.

But to go back to the problem, which side was right on this particular issue? I think there is grave misunderstanding and a tendency on the part of naive people to accept the British point of view as against the American point of view: the theory being, of course, that Churchill had his eye on checking Russia and that the Americans were simple-minded individuals who did not understand what was coming at the end of the war. There are several things to be said about that in making the problem more precise. One of these is this: contrary to the widely-held view, Churchill never *did* talk in terms of active and extensive opera-

tions in the Balkans. What he talked about was advancing into the Italian Plain and up through the Semmering Pass toward Vienna.

This little book of Charles Burton Marshall's, to which I have called your attention, makes a very penetrating comment on Churchill. It was Churchill who used the phrase, "the soft underbelly of the Axis." As Marshall says, this is a phrase which a great man ought never to have used. If you have ever been in the Alps, you do not think of it as being very soft. A line of approach from Italy into Austria would have involved the heaviest kind of fighting and a massive mobilization of materiel. While we were fighting our way up through the Semmering Pass, the Russians would have been advancing into the western industrial area in Germany, in all human probability. I want to dissent very, very emphatically (so far as my limited competence goes) from the point of view that a campaign against the enemy from the south would have yielded impressive political results. I think that it would have yielded very unhappy political results in all human probability in that it would have left the Russians in control of more of Germany.

There is another point there, however, that interests me very much as a historian. On this point I think Churchill was right and I think that probably General Eisenhower was wrong. You know that in the summer of 1944 the war-making governments agreed on a zonal arrangement with regard to Germany. This zonal arrangement was, of course, on the basis of what was thought likely to happen so far as the position of the armies was concerned at the end of the war. What happened was, in practice (as you no doubt know) that the Americans advanced beyond the zonal boundary. My boy was then an artillery forward observer in one of the units that actually got in sight of Czechoslovakia; in fact, I think that he stepped over the boundary at one time. We were in a position beyond our zonal lines, as I say. Churchill in this question did not say: "We will not honor our

agreement." What he did say was: "Hold your positions until you have dickered with the Russians; use this for trading purposes." I think that it is true that they perhaps knew we were a little naive, politically. We drew back and gave up territory which we could have held pending an arrangement with the Russians. There was a question where strategy and politics went together but where, it seems to me, that the political implications of our action were very important indeed.

I think that politics entered into World War II (and here, again, I can only touch on these questions) in a very important way in the Pacific in the gross miscalculation which we made of the military power of China. It seems to me that this is a problem which could have been better handled. Of course it is a little difficult to retain an ardent faith in General Chiang Kai-shek, but certainly the Burma Road enterprise and the whole problem of land operations in China was given an exaggerated importance — and it was given an exaggerated importance because the American people felt that way. This was a political decision which, in my judgment, warped and distorted military strategy.

Let us now look at the problems of the relative present and let us talk once more of politics and strategy with regard to Korea. You can see how politics entered into the situation if you go back to Mr. Acheson's speech of January, 1950 — the famous speech in which he defined the defense perimeter of the United States. There was a strong demand and pressures toward economy and that meant defining our objectives in a limited way. So we defined them in a way that led the Russians to believe that we would not trouble much about Korea. I know Mr. Acheson and respect him very much indeed, but I do think that speech of January, 1950, was a mistake. It was based on certain political conceptions which at the time were important but which, it seems to me, gave away the game in part to the other side. However, I do not want to make that point too dogmatically. Mr. Acheson

has said that it did not have anything to do with it — that they would have attacked anyway. Maybe they would have attacked; one can never be absolutely certain about motives. But we had an idea there at the time, dictated by the state of American politics and by the tempo of the public mind, which could not take account of what was about to happen.

When you come to the Korean War itself, the political factors are very, very obvious. The reasons why we, after the fighting in Korea, finally agreed to an armistice are no doubt partly strategic but they are also partly political. We had upset our allies very much indeed — more so, I think, than they needed to be upset. But the unity of the nations of the Free World is a *sine qua non* of the effective military and diplomatic action of the United States. You cannot have unity if you do not unify. You cannot have unity if you take the position that you know all the answers and that nobody else knows any of them. I think that we have come to the stage in our history where we must accept the political implications as well as the strategic implications of association with other Powers. This, indeed, is largely the theme of this very interesting little book by Charles Burton Marshall, which I have mentioned to you, called "The Limits of Foreign Policy."

There were possibly good strategic reasons why we should not go on into North Korea. In my judgment, there is no reason to believe that a new advance on the Yalu would have necessarily ended the war. My own guess is that it would not have brought the Russians into the conflict, but, there is no reason to believe that it would have necessarily ended the whole business. It would have, of course, involved much more heavy sacrifices than we actually had made and probably more Armed Forces than we could dispose of in one theatre at that time. The political element in the problem was a fundamental element — and that is the point which I want to make. You cannot divorce strategy from the public mood — you cannot divorce strategy from the association with our allies.

Much the same thing occurs in connection with Indochina, only I think that the case for not attempting to strike in Indochina was a stronger case than the case would have been for abstention in Korea. The reasons, again, are reasons which have to be taken into account because they are political reasons. If national resistance can be stimulated and embodied, as it has been in Korea in the person of that gallant, but somewhat misguided, Syngman Rhee, if you can get a body of native opinion that is sufficiently strong to provide the nucleus for sustained resistance to communism — that is fine. But if you are dealing with a social and political situation which is practically fluid, and where you condemn yourself to either the passive or active resistance to a large part of the population, you have an entirely different problem. I think it was fairly clear that one of the considerations involved in the case of Indochina was that the native population could not be depended upon in any substantial way to support any operations against the forces of Ho Chi Minh. The political elements there were undoubtedly amongst the reasons why the Eisenhower administration after its initial *ballon d'essai*, which I mentioned a few moments ago, decided in favor of a very conservative course and did surrender a part of Indochina to the communists.

Those are some of the problems which arise—and they will always arise. Before I leave this question, I just want to point out one other irony which is a part of the current opinion. You remember in Mr. Acheson's speech of January, 1950, that he drew a defense perimeter which did not include Formosa. Now, we think Formosa is essential. This is really not a scientific question; this is a subjective question. The public mood has changed and the public attitude toward Formosa has changed with it in a way.

The final question (for which I see I only have a moment or two) with regard to the application of power is as to politics and victory. Does war imply, as has perhaps been stated by

General MacArthur, ultimate complete submission on the part of the vanquished? Does it imply the complete ignoring of political motives in the making of a military effort? Of course, I do not think that any politically-minded person will possibly accept that point of view. These political realities have to be dealt with — and they are of different kinds at different times.

Take, for an example (and a very interesting one), the limitations placed on military power at the end of World War I. What happened? I was a staff officer at Chaumont in 1918. Of course we had just got going in the fall of 1918, from the point of view of military operations. There were a great many individuals at Chaumont who wanted to go on. On the other hand, this point of view was not the point of view of Marshal Foch, who, of course, was the Generalissimo of the Allied Armies; neither was it the point of view of the President of the United States. What the President tried to do was to bring about peace by edging the Germans from one position to another in a series of notes, by leading them to assume that they would be better treated if there were a revolution in Germany, and by assuring them that they would be given a fair adjustment at the end of the war. There are many ways in which that did not exactly work out the way it was planned to work out; but it did abridge the war and it did end the war sooner.

There is certainly a case, although I do not want to make it an "absolute" case, for the assumption that it was wise to end the war at that time and in that way. It is true that the Germans would have been more fully convinced they had been licked if the war had gone on longer and that Hitler would not have been able to talk about the deception of the Peace of Versailles. But I wonder whether the German nationalists of the Führer type would not have found some other lie, if it had not been that one, that would have served them just as well.

On the other hand, let us look objectively for a moment at the Rooseveltian technique. In the case of Wilson there is

something to be said for his point of view. But I am not amongst those who would criticize President Roosevelt for his "unconditional surrender" speech. In many cases this is thought to be in error. Pretty nearly every time I go to England I am told that it was an error on the part of the President; that he laid down an absolute formula. It seems to me that the answer to that one is one thing in the case of Germany and another in the case of Japan. In the case of Germany, the answer to the idea that this was a mistake seems to me to be that there was a revolution against Hitler in July of 1944, and that it nearly succeeded. Maybe you have read the extraordinary story (Mr. Wilmot tells it in "The Struggle for Europe") of Hitler there, holding his meeting with his staff officers outdoors instead of indoors, which was utterly not according to plan. He was standing at that heavy oak table so that when Stauffenberg's bomb exploded against the table it merely lacerated Hitler instead of destroying him. I think the important thing is that Hitler was firmly in power. Yet there was a revolution against him although we had said that surrender must be "unconditional."

The answer to the "unconditional surrender" formula in the case of Japan is something different, of course. There the answer is that we did not extort unconditional surrender, but we eventually agreed. Ambassador Grew (for whom I have very great respect) was one of those who was most influential in the retention of the Emperor of Japan. In other words, we did make some concession. I do not think that the unconditional surrender hurt very much. It may have stirred the national revolution and it may have been valuable from the Nationalist point of view. But you do not need to be bound by it, in the absolute sense, if an opportunity arises to make concessions which abbreviate the war and which do not jeopardize the nation's security or its objectives.

It is all a question of power, as you can see. It is not a military question, but a political question. That is why the debate

goes on, why it will go on at all times, and why it has to be thought out in both strategic and political terms. All we can say to civilians is that they ought to be more fully aware of the necessity of power and that they ought to study the problems of power more than they do. Perhaps what ought to be said to those who are the mechanics of power is that as they view the problem they must somehow or other reconcile it with the democratic process and with the political instincts of a self-governing people.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

Professor Dexter Perkins

Professor Perkins was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on 20 June 1889. He holds A.B. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University.

His teaching career began at the University of Cincinnati in 1914 as an Instructor in History. In 1915 he joined the faculty of the University of Rochester as an Instructor of History and advanced through the various ranks, attaining full Professorship in 1922 and becoming Head of the Department of History in 1925. In 1954 Professor Perkins accepted the John L. Senior Professorship in American Civilization at Cornell University.

He was the first Professor of American History and Institutions at Cambridge University in 1945-46. Since 1950 he has been President of the Salzburg (Austria) Seminar in American Studies. Professor Perkins has lectured at University College (London), at the University of Uppsala (Sweden), and at the National War College. He was Official Historian for the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information at the United Nations Conference in San Francisco and is currently an Overseer of Harvard University and Chairman of the Harvard Foundation Council.

Professor Perkins has written widely on American foreign policy and is a specialist on the Monroe Doctrine. He is the author of: "The Monroe Doctrine, 1867-1907"; "Hands Off: The History of the Monroe Doctrine"; "America and Two Wars"; "The U. S. and the Caribbean"; "The Evolution of American Foreign Policy"; "The American Approach to Foreign Policy" (a general philosophical treatment of the American approach to foreign policy which has been translated into German and Japanese).